

### Karate Principles for Self Defense

Included in this chapter is a list of generalized principles of the self-defense side of Karate, meant to be applied to every day life.

The next two chapters after this detail technique, and kata, respectively. A comprehensive listing of all techniques and variations as practiced in every family style and branch of karate, as well as the differences in kata between branches, is beyond the focus of this book. Also, no book, no matter how technical the explanations and pictures, can possibly replace formal instruction. Therefore, this book is intended as a general guide that I hope will serve you alongside your daily training.

The general learning curve intended is for body mechanics, mental discipline, and ethical precepts to be practiced in the first phases of training. After such training, application of principles, mental focus, and personal development may be assisted.

#### **Wa no Michi - the Way of Peace**

We should seek unity, harmony, and peace within ourselves and the world around us.

#### **Karate-do - The Way of the Empty Hand**

Do not look to one way of doing things or one technique. Instead, internalize all you have learned, to become like water, and take the path of least resistance. Do not meet force with force, but avoid or stop attacks using body shifting, footwork, stop hits, and deflection. Blend naturally with opposing energy.

#### **Zanshin**

'Remaining mind' / Awareness.

#### **Haragei**

Breathing art. Breathe, relax, and settle your body, naturally.

#### **Mushin**

'Mind-without-thinking'. Empty your mind and be fully aware of all angles. Do not concentrate on one technique, but let your principles guide you according to the situation.

#### **Kiai**

'Life force harmony'/Spirit Focus. Exert your spirit in a powerful yet natural way. Be flexible, intimidating, and untouchable.

### **Tai Sabaki**

Body management/body shifting/'optimum utilization'. These movements are performed with economy of motion.

### **The 3 body shifting methods - San mi Ittai**

**Ten-i** - Move away from the attack.

**Ten-tai** - Turn and realign the body to dodge the attack or reduce the area on your body that is vulnerable to attack.

**Ten-gi** - Perform techniques while the attack passes through. Consider using his/her momentum to your advantage.

### **Timings for counter attack**

Consider uses for the body shifting methods.

**Go no Sen** - Defensive attack. Counter once the attack is completed, but before the opponent is able to attack again.

**Sen** - Simultaneously attack with the attacker. You will complete your counter first, and/or displace the attacker's movement.

**Sensen no Sen** - Preempt the attack with your own, by perceiving your opponent's intent. This will catch him/her off guard, breaking his/her mental balance.

### **Defensive movements**

Heavily influenced by Shindo Yoshin-ryu jujutsu, these movements are used to control the opponent's energy. These movements apply maai and body shifting. Consider uses of the timings for counter attack.

**Nagasu** - Flowing / Fluidity. Move evasively off the line of attack but closely enough that the attacker's force can be used to add to your own.

**Irimi** - Blending in with / entering the opponent's attack.

**Inasu** - Move under, inside, or around the attack.

**Noru** - Control the opponent's movement.

### **Musubi**

'Connection'. This deals with finding the opponent's center of gravity. Use as little energy and strength as possible when making this 'connection'. Focusing on skill in application rather than force guarantees proper use of principle, and reduce your opponent's chances of using strength to overpower you. Relax and develop sensitivity! Once you find this, you will find the same principles in all 'waza' / techniques. Remember to push with the hands and pull with the feet.

### **Ki Ken Tai no Ichi**

'Mind and Body as One'. Coordination of mind and body in movement. Thought and action must become one.

### **Hei Jo Shin**

'Calm mind and body'. When the opponent feints or draws a weapon, you should not flinch. Instead, fight reflexively with a focused mind.

### **Maai**

The state of mind and spirit of the combatants, and the distance between them. Keep enough space to attack and defend. At a high level, you control the spirit and energy of a conflict. Draw a reaction from the opponent that will give you a tactical advantage. Practice the above principles, and continuously study specific tactics, to understand and apply maai.

Below is a link to the article that was my major reference for many of the principles listed in this article. I applied my own understanding of and experience with these principles in writing this article. The reference page is below -

<http://www.sannoya.com/principles.htm>